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SIMPLE TRUTH:

OR, A

PLEA FOR INFANTS.

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SIMPLE TRUTH:

OR, A

PLEA FOR INFANTS.

BEING A SERIES OF

PLAIN ARGUMENTS,

DRAWN FROM

SCRIPTURE,

IN SUPPORT OF THE

DOCTRINE OF INFANT-BAPTISM:

WITH

ANSWERS

TO EVERY

MODERN OBJECTION URGED AGAINST IT,

ALSO,

A FEW THOUGHTS

ON THE

SABBATH DAY.

RECOMMENDED TO THE WAVERING, THE DOUBTING, AND THE INQUISITIVE.

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SECTION I.

WHATEVER the identical import of the word [Baptize] is, it is certainly uſed in various parts of the New Teſtament without any reſpect to *water*, except by alluſion. Thus, when our Lord aſked, *Mat.* xx. 22. *Are ye able—to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with?* He meant, it ſeems, to aſk, if they were able to enter into his kingdom of glory by a cruel death. And when he tells the apoſtles they ſhould be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, and forbids their preaching till that event took place, it evidently means their being initiated into their office by the deſcent of the Holy Spirit.

Again, when it is ſaid our Lord would baptize with the Holy Ghoſt (unleſs we refer it to his extraordinary operations) it relates to the new birth, and ſignifies our initiation into Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom, and the immunities of the ſons of God.

Further, when the apoſtle Paul tells us, 1 *Cor.* x. 2. the children of Iſrael *were baptized unto Moſes in the cloud and in the ſea*, the meaning is, they were by that miracle initiated into Moſes. They found themſelves delivered from ſlavery, and ſung a ſong of triumph: they believed the Lord, and his ſervant Moſes, and took him for their leader and lawgiver. But there was no immerſion under water; the ſtrength of the miracle lay in their marching through the ſea on dry land.

If the word in the original ſignified entering into a *dye-vat*, to take a *new tinge* or colour, it is very expreſſive of initiation, entering into Chriſtianity, and muſt be very ſuperſtitiouſly applied when confined to entering into cold water.

While ſome underſtand the Greek word, *Baptiſm*, in the Engliſh verſion, to ſignify *waſhing only* with water, and others as poſitively affirm, it means *immerſion*; a third ſort, without attending to the Greek, ſuppoſe every ſpoonful of water in this ſpiritual ordinance is not of equal importance with every pin in the tabernacle; but while they hold with *water*, as of the *eſſence* of the inſtitution, believe the *quantity*, or *mode* of adminiſtering *non-eſſential*. Let every man be fully perſuaded in his own mind. It ſhould however be remembered by all, that *infant-baptiſm* and *ſprinkling* are not neceſſarily connected. A child may, with as much propriety, and (commonly) with equal ſafety to its health, be baptized by immerſion as an adult.

Though it might be obſerved here (notwithſtanding the aſſertions of many to the contrary) there is no poſitive proof that all the early Chriſtians were baptized by immerſion; and many circumſtances render it improbable. For is it ſuppoſeable, that in every place where the word was preached, there ſhould be conveniency to plunge ſcores of people under water, in countries where water was often ſcarce, and fetched from a great diſtance? And yet the hiſtory informs us, they were baptized at the time when, and the place where they were converted, without waiting a month to make preparation: many in their own houſes.

Here a contender for immerſion will ſay, "They had *baths* for the purpoſes of purification." But that this was not cuſtomary among the Jews, we may

may gather from our Lord's firſt public miracle: there we are told, the manner of providing water for purification was in large *ſtone pots*, out of which they drew it. And this appears beſt adapted for the purpoſe; for had they gone into a *bath* to cleanſe from any ceremonial defilement, that *bath* would have been polluted, and every one who touched the water have been unclean: thus the uncleanneſs would ever be ſpreading. They therefore bathed their fleſh with water, not by *going into*, but by *applying* it; either waſhing with, or pouring it on. And what ran off, paſſing away, was ſuppoſed to carry away the pollution with it.

Baths ſeem to be unknown in Solomon's days, as among all his ſumptuous or convenient buildings we read nothing of *baths*, either hot or cold. His brazen ſea in the temple held 2000 *baths* of water. The Rabbies compute the bath conſiſted of eight gallons. The prieſts waſhed at this laver, not went into it: therefore it may be thought *baths* were not very common in Judea, becauſe not the cuſtomary method of purification.

Another difficulty was the *kind* of water; for no Jew would have gone into a *ſtanding water*, as it rather typified *corruption* than *purification*, and was liable to ſo many caſualties as might render it ceremonially unclean; they always carefully avoided it; which may account for John's baptizing near to Jordan, not for the *quantity*, but the *quality* of the water. There were many waters there, namely, many running ſtreams.

Again, the Jews were too well acquainted with waſhing, and too exact in its performance ever to go into water with *apparel* on. Their cloaths and their fleſh were ſo carefully diſtinguiſhed, that

they muſt have conſidered it as a defilement to be plunged under water in any dreſs whatever: ſo that if John baptized by immerſion, no doubt they went into the water *naked*. And as it does not appear that any women were among them, it might poſſibly be ſo. But when the apoſtles baptized thouſands at a time, a mixed multitude of men and women, no one can ſuppoſe they were put under water naked: and dreſſed they were not for the above reaſons.

Now, under all theſe difficulties, is it likely the apoſtles could always meet with convenience to baptize by immerſion? and yet baptize they did, without waiting for time or place.

After all, that which is moſt ſimple in itſelf, and has leaſt parade, or ſhow, appears beſt ſuited to the genius of the goſpel; which is no more much waſhing, than it is meat and drink. Chriſt's yoke is eaſy; he inſtituted no terrifying and unnatural rites: and all the mortification he requires is to ſubdue our corrupt appetites, in order to make our own lives pleaſant, and his religion acceptable. But the *ſubject* of baptiſm, not the *mode*, is the principal intent of this paper.

SECTION II.

ALL the account we have of baptiſm is the hiſtory of proſelyting; and that *adult* proſelytes from any other to the chriſtian religion ſhould be *believers* previous to baptiſm, is what all, who hold with water-baptiſm, are agreed in.

But

But as to the *ſeed* of the church, the children of Chriſtians, at what age, under what circumſtances, in what mode, or whether they were baptized at all; are particulars the New Teſtament does not expreſly mention: therefore the right way to find our duty is to look back, after the example of our Lord, when he pointed the inquiſitive to the original inſtitution of marriage, to ſatisfy them as to its proper ſubjects. So if we turn back to the original inſtitution of an initiating ordinance, we may diſcover who are the proper ſubjects of baptiſm.

It has been obſerved by ſome, that baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper came in the *ſtead* of circumciſion and the paſſover. I rather think them the *ſame*, in ſubſtance, the outward ſymbols only being changed, while yet the original ſignification is retained: the one *initiatory*, the other *commemorative*. And although it was neceſſary to change the ſymbols, to aſſert the authority of Chriſt, as Lawgiver and King in his church, and alſo to remove the ruſt they had contracted among Jewiſh ceremonies, and to give them a ſimple and ſpiritual appearance, ſuited to the ſimplicity and ſpirituality of the goſpel-diſpenſation; yet it was not neceſſary they ſhould be aboliſhed with Jewiſh ceremonies, and a law of works, ſeeing they were both inſtituted prior to the giving of the law: circumciſion 430 years before, the paſſover but a few months. Baptiſm, which is my preſent ſubject, I ſay, partakes of the qualities of circumciſion, as a divine appointment, initiating its ſubjects into church-privileges, and having the force of a ſeal, which is generally underſtood to be the nature of baptiſm. I will endeavour to prove it was likewiſe of circumciſion. And, firſt (contrary to ſome) I aſſert circumciſion was not *legal*. Every thing *in* the law, was not

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of the law. Moral obligations, the worſhip of God, and the obſervation of the Sabbath, though incorporated with the legal diſpenſation, did not originate with it, or depend upon it, neither did circumciſion, for Moſes did not inſtitute it, he only repeated the words of inſtitution, as delivered to Abraham. Our Lord takes particular notice of this circumſtance. Moſes gave you circumciſion, not becauſe it is of Moſes, but of the fathers. And we know the fathers did not receive it as a ſeal of a covenant of works, but as the ſeal of the righteouſneſs which is by faith, a covenant of promiſe which God gave to Abraham, and his ſpiritual ſeed; that he ſhould be the father of many nations, *viz.* the father of the faithful in all nations, and ages of the church; and in his ſeed, namely, in Chriſt Jeſus, all the earth ſhould be bleſſed. Now this covenant, ſealed as it was by circumciſion, the apoſtle juſtly argues, could not be diſannulled by the giving of the law of ceremonies and works upward of 400 years afterwards.

And as circumciſion did not belong to the legal diſpenſation; ſo neither was it (as ſome would have us believe) the ſeal of a *temporal* covenant, diſtinguiſhing the natural deſcendants of Abraham, as heirs of the land of Canaan. If this were true, it might be obſerved, that every thing which entitled the children of Iſrael to the land of promiſe is typical of our title to the kingdom of heaven: but the contrary is the truth. It was not uſed as a temporal conveyance, but as a ſpiritual priviledge. It belonged not to Iſrael, as inhabitants of Canaan, but to Iſrael as the viſible church of God. Thus in Abraham's family, who were its firſt ſubjects, there was not ſo much as one, who had expectation of, or title to, the pleaſant land, except the

father of the faithful himſelf: and he profeſſed himſelf a ſtranger, and looked for a better country. The ſon of promiſe was not yet born; and neither Abraham's ſervants, or the ſon of the bond woman, had any claim to Canaan. Into what then were they initiated, but into the peculiar viſible church, which was at this time formed, and into which Abraham, at the command of God, incorporated both himſelf, and his numerous family, by this initiating ſeal?

Thus the peculiar viſible church began with Abraham; and Iſaac, being the firſt born into it, may perhaps be the reaſon why God calls Iſrael, as Iſaac's deſcendants, his ſon, his firſt born.

Another proof that circumciſion was a church-inſtitution, and not a national priviledge, is the law concerning proſelytes, who had no expectation of a title to, or poſſeſſion in, the land of Canaan: yet if one of theſe choſe to partake of a church-priviledge with the people of God, namely, eating the paſſover, he muſt not only be circumciſed himſelf, but muſt likewiſe circumciſe all his male children.

To wind up all, the manner in which the inſtitution was firſt given, proves it not to belong to their civil polity, but as eccleſiaſtic. They were a kingdom of prieſts; and this ſacred rite was given to Abraham, and afterwards repeated to Iſrael, not to monoplize to themſelves, but as a ſacred depoſit, which they were punctually to perform upon all over whom they had any influence; namely, all who were willing (as the proſelytes) and all they had a command over, whether willing or not; all their ſervants bought with money, and all the infants born in their houſe. So that the ſon of a bought ſlave was equally entitled to it as

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the free-born ſon of an Iſraelite. Thus the ſon of the alien had a name in God's houſe, though he had no eſtate in the land of Canaan. A full proof it was not the ſeal of a temporal, but a ſpiritual covenant, a church-priviledge.

St. Paul conſiders circumciſion exactly in this ſenſe, as the mark, or viſible badge of the true church, when he ſays of ſuch as worſhip God in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, we are the circumciſion; that is, we are the true viſible church of God.

Thus the doctrine, or law of circumciſion, and that of baptiſm, appear the very ſame; as initiating into the viſible church, and being the ſeal of the covenant eſtabliſhed on promiſe. And their moral ſignification likewiſe, is the ſame, the one referring to the purity of the heart; circumciſing the heart to fear the Lord: and the other ſignifying not ſo much the putting away the filth of the fleſh, as the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God.

Having proved the *ordinances* to be the ſame, I infer the *ſubjects* ſhould be the ſame; and prove the right of infant-baptiſm in three words.

Firſt, What is poſitively right in one caſe cannot be wrong, I think, in a ſimilar one. If it was poſitively right in the founder of the viſible church, the father of the faithful to initiate his infants into the church, giving them the ſeal of the covenant of promiſe; can it be wrong for chriſtian parents to do the ſame by their infants?

Secondly, If no ſcripture is of private interpretation, then is not the law of circumciſion ſo; but the law which commanded the Hebrews to initiate all the infants born within the pale of the church, ſtanding (as it does) unrepealed by any other law from heaven, is binding upon parents throughout the ſeveral ſucceſſions of the church.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Whatever abſurdity is charged on infant-baptiſm, is equally chargeable on infant-circumciſion, conſequently chargeable on God: but who can charge him, without doing it fooliſhly?

SECTION III.

I Proceed to ſtate a few objections, and to endeavour ſome anſwer to them.

An antipœdo-baptiſt objects to adminiſtering the ordinance to infants, becauſe they are *wholly paſſive*. It is abſurd (ſays he) to adminiſter the ſeal of a covenant, to which they are not capable of conſenting; and impious in parents to attempt to preclude their judgments, by initiating them into a religion before they are capable of choice.

I reply, If the intent of adminiſtering the ordinance was to initiate into any particular congregation, ſect, or party whatever, the objection would have much force. Infants could not be its proper ſubjects, becauſe no man, even a parent, has a power over the conſcience; and it would be binding them where God has left them free. But if it initiate them into the general aſſembly, and church of the firſt-born; if it obliges only to call God, Father; and Chriſt, Maſter; leaving them the ſame liberty to inveſtigate truth, and judge for themſelves, as if no ſuch rite had been performed: if this be the true nature of the inſtitution (as I think it is) then part of the objection vaniſheth.

But the objection turns upon a wrong principle, even a deiſtical one, ſuppoſing we may either take,

or leave chriſtianity at pleaſure. "Paſſive and not capable of choice." But ſuppoſe them active, and about to chuſe; have they a right to refuſe? Certainly not. Becauſe man has no right over conſcience, has God none? Their birth in a goſpel-day, in a land of light, of chriſtian parents (in all which they are abſolutely paſſive) puts it entirely out of their power to be any thing elſe, but chriſtians, or reprobates.

Was the child of a Jew at liberty to chuſe whether he would be a worſhipper of Jehovah, or ſerve dumb idols? Certainly he was not. For when Moſes rehearſed the covenant to the people, he declared, he made the covenant not only with thoſe who ſtood and heard him that day, but alſo with the little ones who were not capable of hearing his words, or attending to their import, *Deut.* xxix. who yet were involved in all its penalties, in caſe of diſobedience. He adds, and with as many as are not with us this day, meaning future generations; or ſtrangers, who might hear its contents, and be brought under its bonds.

And was not the Goſpel publiſhed in the very ſame language? Hear the apoſtle Peter, addreſſing his country-men, *Acts* ii. 39. The promiſe is to you, and to your children, and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. So that this ſacred religion (as did the former diſpenſation) offers its bleſſing to, and involves in its threatnings, all who live within its ſound; or are born within its precincts; whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. Therefore children of believers, being born under the bonds of the covenant, have an undoubted right to the ſeal.

I paſs

I paſs on to another objection. It is urged againſt the practice we are pleading for; "that it "looks like trifling with the inſtitution, to per- "form it on a ſubject, who knows nothing of what "is done; therefore God muſt eſteem it a mock- "ery, and reject the offering."

To this I anſwer firſt by a queſtion. Is not this ordinance as verily a divine inſtitution as the fixing the rainbow in the heavens; and the water uſed by faith on this occaſion, as truly a ſign, as the colours of that radiant arch? And if God looks upon the bow, and remembers his covenant with the beaſts of the earth, *Gen.* ix. 16. will he not much more look upon this ſacred ſymbol, and remember his covenant with the ſeed of the righteous? Are they not of more value than many ſparrows?

By the *ſeed of the righteous*, the *children of believers*, I mean the children of ſuch as make a credible profeſſion of chriſtianity, and have faith enough to bring their offspring to this ordinance, who are born within the pale of the church.

And, by the bye, ſuppoſing the immediate parents are profligate, all their anceſtors might not have been ſo; and God remembers his covenant, not only with the ſeed of his people, but with their ſeed's ſeed. If he viſit ſins as far forward as the fourth generation, will he not extend mercy, and remember his covenant as far? Did not the kings of Judea enjoy that dignity by virtue of the covenant made with David; notwithſtanding a ſucceſſion of very wicked princes? They were ſtill the ſons of David, whoever were their fathers, or their forefathers. Nor did God cut off the entail of the promiſes from, or let go his claim to, the children of his ancient church; although their parents were

abominably wicked, doing worſe than the heathen whom the Lord caſt out before them. God's thoughts are not as ours. His covenant ſtandeth faſt for ever, and the thoughts of his heart unto all generations.

But, to return, I anſwer ſecondly, by affirming there are voluntary agents, who will be accepted in behalf of the child, although he is paſſive: The parent, whoſe ſole property (under God) the child is, and who, therefore, has an undoubted right to diſpoſe of him, only in the Lord: And the Lord Jeſus, who (without the child's conſent) has redeemed his body from the power of the grave; and will, if it die in infancy, receive the ſoul to glory.

Now are not theſe two (I was going to ſay, proxies) ſufficient to enter into covenant? And will not the Almighty accept the purchaſe of his Son's blood; and through his mediation, the free-will offering of the parent?

If it be aſked, What benefit can accrue to the child, if it live? I anſwer, If the goſpel is in itſelf a real bleſſing, it is certainly a bleſſing to be born within its covenant, and initiated into its priviledges. If the means of grace are adapted to their end, and the end attainable through the means, then he who is initiated into the viſible church, may attain that for which he was apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus, even an inheritance among all them that are ſanctified.

But the objector proceeds. "The ſubjects fit "for baptiſm (ſays he) muſt act faith, and repent-"ance; and that cannot infants do."

To this I reply, Whatever God commanded, he commanded to thoſe who are capable of obedience. What the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who

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are under the law. True, the apoſtles did teach faith to all, and repentance to ſome, previous to baptiſm, among thoſe who were capable of ſuch acts, and in whom they were neceſſary preparatives: muſt it therefore follow, that God cannot diſpenſe with ſuch acts in ſubjects not capable?

I try this by two examples. The proſelyte to the Jewiſh religion muſt be, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, a penitent; he muſt, with compunction of ſoul, renounce all his former idolatrous principles, and practices, before he could be a qualified ſubject of circumciſion.

Again; Abraham's faith was undoubtedly a pre-requiſite to circumciſion; for he received circumciſion as a ſeal of that righteouſneſs which he had by faith before he was circumciſed. Here are repentance and faith indiſpenſably neceſſary in the two ſubjects. And what ſays the command of God? Therefore you muſt not circumciſe your children till they are capable of ſuch acts? Quite the contrary; therefore you are obliged to circumciſe all your males (the command to Abraham) all your male children (the command of the proſelyte) and that as a teſt of obedience in the one, and as ſecuring the right to another ordinance in the other. And is mortal man more pure than his Maker? Can man be more wiſe and juſt than God?

But the truth is, an initiating ordinance deals with its ſubjects according as where it finds them. If it find them without the pale of the church, it deals with them as moral agents; and aſks their conſent to come in. It muſt therefore addreſs ſuch who are of age, voluntarily to give that conſent. But if it find them within the pale of the church, where God hath placed them, and from whence

whence they have no right to remove; it applies the ſeal without aſking their conſent. This, I think, accounts for all the firſt chriſtians being adult believers before they were baptized; and ſtill leaves the priviledge open to infants ever ſince.

I proceed to anſwer another objection, "Infant-"baptiſm ſhould be laid aſide, becauſe it has been "abuſed."

And I aſk, what good thing in the world has not? If the objection means that men lead profligate lives in dependence on their outward priviledges; this may be true in ſome inſtances: but to make a fair eſtimate of this cenſure; I would take a thouſand men promiſcuouſly from every denomination, all church members, by their own conſent. I find among theſe nine hundred, who are content with their infant baptiſm; and one hundred adult baptiſts. Now if there are nine profligate among the former, and but one among the latter, the odds of the vicious in the two parties will appear to be that of nine to one; and yet upon an exact calculation they are both alike. But if the objection mean that infant-baptiſm has been abuſed to ſuperſtition and prieſtcraft; this is granted: few will attempt to prove the contrary. Yet this abuſe is rather accidental: not becauſe it is infant-baptiſm, but becauſe it happens to be involved in national eſtabliſhments. And (without a ſpirit of prophecy) it may eaſily be foretold, if ever adult-baptiſm become a part of either popery, or hierarchy, it will be abuſed in the ſame manner.

Nor is it more abuſed than the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper. Muſt therefore the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, becauſe it is groſly abuſed, be

taken

taken from the church-militant, who are the proper ſubjects of it, and given to the church-triumphant, who have no need of it? No more ſhould baptiſm be taken from infants, who are its proper ſubjects, and given to adults, to whom, as already profeſſed members of the church, it does not belong.

SECTION IV.

I Enquire farther, what is the mind of Chriſt on this ſubject. And the Evangeliſt tells us, they brought young children unto him, that he might lay his hands on them. Mark, they were *young*—*brought* in arms—to *receive a bleſſing*; not to be taught; they were not capable to receive inſtruction; for which reaſon the apoſtles forbad them, as unworthy their Maſter's notice, and incapable of receiving any benefit from him. Our Lord, upon this occaſion ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. Here is the command doubled to make it ſtronger, and varied in its form to make it the better underſtood. And our Lord inforceth it with the moſt cogent reaſons. Of ſmall account as you may ſuppoſe theſe little children, my Father has provoided them a retinue of angels: and if their angels (or miniſters) behold the face, are admitted into the preſence of my Father; would you deny them admittance into my preſence? A ſtrong reaſon: but a ſtronger follows; For of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord explained

part

part of his meaning, when he took a little child, and ſet him in the midſt, and ſaid, Except ye be converted (regenerate, or new-born) and become like this little child, ye ſhall in no wiſe enter into the kingdom of heaven: therefore like to ſuch, unprejudiced, without malice, guile, or hypocriſy, meek, and yieldable muſt you be, as members of the kingdom of grace. Look at your pattern, and copy after it. But remember if the copy is fair, ſo is the original. If the convert is welcome to my arms, and dear to my boſom, ſo is this child, who is literally new-born.

It is however the full ſenſe of this argument, that with ſuch the kingdom of heaven is peopled. For if half our ſpecies die in childhood, which (according to juſt calculation is ſuppoſed) it may very fairly be concluded, that the majority of inhabitants in the heaven prepared for human ſouls, are children. Of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven.

Well, our Lord backs his command, and motives with example. He took them to his arms, embraced them, and bleſſed them. Now, can we think our Lord did all this only as another lord biſhop might have done? as an act of condeſcention to the weakneſs of a few ſuperſtitious women? Did the great Teacher come from God, he that ſpake as never man ſpake, ſay ſo much in vain, if it be yet in vain? Or is it not written for our admonition in theſe latter days? Has it nothing in it to anſwer the cavils of an antipœdo-baptiſt, who forbids theſe little children coming to the arms of the church, which is Chriſt's body, where he can receive them, and bleſs them?

But here a queſtion ſtarts, did our Lord baptiſe theſe children? I anſwer, No: nor was baptiſm at that time a chriſtian inſtitution: nor was circumciſion

cumciſion aboliſhed. But ſurely now that chriſtian baptiſm is inſtituted, and generally acknowledged; this command ſo very forcibly urged, both by motives and example, ſhould have ſome weight in directing to its proper ſubjects; and chriſtians ſhould bring their little children to Chriſt by baptiſm, as the only way little children can be brought to him.

This looks like the mind of Chriſt.

SECTION V.

I Now plead the cauſe of infants from the uſual manner of God's covenanting; namely, with men, and their children. Thus Noah, and his ſeed; David, and his ſeed, *&c.* The ſame method is purſued in the New Teſtament. When Zaccheus was converted, our Lord did not ſay, This day is ſalvation come to this *man*, but to this *houſe:* ſtrongly intimating, that the faith of the parent intitled the children to goſpel priviledges. And thus the apoſtle, when the jailor aſked, what ſhall I do to be ſaved? anſwered, Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thine houſe. Thus the apoſtle Peter, The promiſe is to you, and to your children. But the Abrahamic covenant, to which antipœdo-baptiſts, in common with other chriſtians, claim a right, runs expreſly thus, I will be a God to thee, and to thy ſeed after thee. Suffer little infants therefore to put in their claim to a goſpel-inſtitution, in the

words of an apoſtle, We, brethren, as Iſaac was, are heirs of the promiſe. And if equal heirs, certainly have an equal right to the ſeal of the promiſe.

Under the Old Teſtament, the church was always repreſented, as ſtanding in a marriage relation to Jehovah: and her children were conſidered as his immediate offſpring: and when ſhe had ſacrilegiouſly alienated the divine right in offering her ſeed to Moloch; thus God brings in the charge; Ye have taken my children, which ye brought forth unto me, *&c.* Correſpondent to this ſentiment, the apoſtle Paul aſſerts the relative holineſs of a believer's children, even where one parent proved an idolator; the unbelieving wife is ſanctified by the believing huſband, *&c.* elſe were your children unclean—as polluted put from the prieſthood, illegitimate, not the genuine offſpring of heaven, or ſeed of the church, as not born within the bonds of the covenant; but without the pale of the church, where the unclean were ever ſuppoſed to be, common and unclean (ſee Peter's viſion, as applied to the gentiles)—but now are they holy; that is, appropriate, as the prieſt's children, to ſanctuary priviledges; the holy ſeed, born within the ſacred incloſure; not common, but holy. Who then can forbid water that theſe ſhould not be baptized into the name of Chriſt; who in ſome ſenſe are born chriſtians, within the pale of the Chriſtian church, and entitled to its immunities? If God, for their ſakes, ſanctified (in ſome degree) even an idolator; what are we, that we ſhould deny them the priviledge of an initiatory ſeal, to which Providence has eminently entitled them.

I plead

I plead further the cauſe of infants.

If they are capable of receiving the Holy Ghoſt, are they not capable ſubjects of baptiſm? And that they are ſo, is proved; for John the Baptiſt was filled with the Holy Ghoſt from his mother's womb. This one inſtance proves the poſſibility: and it is impoſſible for any to prove this a ſingle inſtance. Who can ſay but this may be verified in ſome of your offspring, who are born to greater priviledges than John the Baptiſt? for the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

I plead again. Was the goſpel ſent to make men unnatural? Did not moſt nations dedicate their children to their gods? And did not the command of Jehovah ſhew the propriety of ſuch a cuſtom, when he inſtituted an ordinance for this very purpoſe, only directing to himſelf as the proper object? And can we certainly believe Chriſt came into the world to deſtroy both natural affection, and the command of God?

But the antipœdo-baptiſt expects an explicit order. Is there (ſays he) any *command* in the New Teſtament to baptize infants? I anſwer, No: nor is there any command to baptize an old woman. Yet if the command to baptize all include one, it may as well include the other.

Yet further, I anſwer, Neither was there occaſion for ſuch a command. It is quite ſufficient that the words of inſtitution were to baptize all, without ſpecifying the age.

If no ordinance had ever been appointed for infants, it would have been neceſſary for the great Legiſlator to be more explicit. But when this command to baptize all nations, was given to a Jew, with the bible in his hands, and the law of the proſelyte before his eyes; if our Lord had meant

meant to exclude infants, was it not neceſſary to have put in a very ſtrong negation? Would he not at leaſt have reverſed his own words, and ſaid, ſuffer *not* little children to come unto me; but *forbid* them? Therefore under ſuch circumſtances, their *not being excluded*, is a poſitive proof they are *included:* and the command to baptize *all*, is a command to baptize *infants.*

It may be aſked here, did the apoſtles underſtand their commiſſion in this extenſive ſenſe? I anſwer, No, they did not. The calling of the Gentiles and aboliſhing the Jewiſh ceremonies, were among the many things which our Lord ſaid, they were not able to bear. They could not underſtand them becauſe prejudice had blinded their eyes. Theſe were the grand myſteries, which the apoſtle Paul declares had been hid through all the ages of the church: and which coſt him more labour to unfold in the courſe of his Miniſtry, than every other tenet put together.

But ſhall their ignorance make the truth of Chriſt of none effect? Could words be clearer, or language plainer, than, Preach the goſpel to every creature; Teach (or diſciple) all nations? And yet there needed an extraordinary viſion to convince the apoſtle Peter he was not to call the Gentiles common and unclean. And he needed both the recital of this viſion, and the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on Cornelius, and his friends, to ſatisfy his brethren as to the lawfulneſs of teaching the Gentiles.

And even after our Lord had miraculouſly called a perſecutor, and veſted him with this particular miſſion; and they had ſeen the bleſſed effects of his miniſtry: yet ſtill they kept together at Jeruſalem till perſecution drove them thence.

And

And their veneration for the Moſaic rites and ceremonies, was ſo great; that nothing leſs than the removal of every ſtone of the temple, was neceſſary to looſe them from an attendance on all its inſtitutions,

So that we may ſafely conclude; whatever the apoſtle Paul might do, who baptized houſholds among the Gentiles, yet the other apoſtles, and the church at Jeruſalem did not baptize infants; for this reaſon, becauſe they ſtill continued to circumciſe. And as circumciſion initiated into the viſible church, and that church had for ſome centuries been loaded with the ceremonies of the Moſaic œconomy, ſo eventually it initiated into the law of Moſes, and they could not initiate their infants both into Moſes and into Chriſt.

But after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, which evidently proved the Moſaic œconomy to be at an end; circumciſion ſubſided by degrees, and infant-baptiſm took place of it. Thus infant-baptiſm came into the church in the very manner our Lord foretold his kingdom would come, without obſervation, neither lo here, nor lo there.

I now aſſert that in a place where the goſpel is profeſſed, childhood is the only proper time to be baptized in. For in vain do any pretend to initiate a man into the viſible church, who by thirty years attendance on public worſhip, has been thirty years a public profeſſor: or into the inviſible church whom they will not admit to the ordinance, unleſs they believe him previouſly renewed and ſanctified. Whereas the Holy Ghoſt, except in one ſingle inſtance, was always given after baptiſm, not before.

SECT.

SECTION VI.

HAVING done ſomething towards proving a child's right to the ſeal of the goſpel-covenant, and the parent's duty to conſecrate his child in a chriſtian inſtitution: I ſay further, a child can have no right in after life to revoke the deed. For beſide that we read of no law which authorizeth a child to diſannul, and make void the vow of a parent; the baptiſmal covenant is in itſelf irrevocable, being founded in the nature and reaſon of things. For what did his parents without his conſent? They gave him up to God, who had an unalienable right to him: they initiated him into the chriſtian religion, the laſt, and beſt diſpenſation; in its nature, never to be ſurpaſſed; in its appointment, never to be recalled. And if he had been capable of choice, was he not obliged to chuſe juſt ſo? And will it not be at his peril, if he do not ratify that very deed, and ſubſcribe to every article of it? It was his *priviledge* to be choſen to chriſtianity, when incapable: it will be his *duty* to chuſe it for himſelf, as ſoon as capable.

Then is not rebaptizing in adult age a very great abſurdity? Seeing ſuch perſons knowledge of the goſpel, and their profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, inſtead of rendering them fit ſubjects for baptiſm, really confirm, and make valid their infant-baptiſm.

Here

Here an Antipœdobaptiſt takes ſhelter under the cant term of infant-ſprinkling, and upon the uſe of that phraſe, with an air of effrontery, abſolutely affirms, a man who was baptized in infancy, never has been baptized at all.

This is a low ſubterfuge to apologize for their rebaptizing, as the fact is plainly otherwiſe. His parents having received a ſon, piouſly devoted him to God; being Chriſtians, they did it through a Mediator; and acknowledging Chriſt, as Lord and King in his church, they did it with all the ſolemnity of a goſpel-ordinance. I do not ſay with all the circumſtantials which attended our Lord's baptiſm: for then they muſt have carried him to a river, nay the river Jordan. Neither was it with all the particulars which attended the primitive Chriſtians: for in that caſe he muſt have been educated in a falſe religion, and of age to renounce that, and enter into a new one: yet ſurely with all the rites of the inſtitution, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; and with water as the ſign. Now this is matter of fact, and all the rhetoric in the world cannot make that *not to be* which *is*.

But ſay the Antipœdobaptiſts, "The child was "paſſive, and did not conſent to all this." And was not the child of an Iſraelite as paſſive at eight days old, as the child of a Chriſtian? Yet who ever ſaid he was not circumciſed, and by circumciſion bound to keep the law of God? It is often much eaſier to ſay than prove. I ſuppoſe every Lord Biſhop in the land will ſay, no Antipœdobaptiſt miniſter is ordained: and they all laugh at the aſſertion. And by the ſame authority (I mean that of common ſenſe) may the man, who has been ſolemnly baptized in infancy, laugh, when an Anti-

pœdobaptiſt

pœdobaptiſt miniſter gravely tells him, he is not baptized.

Further, the Antipœdobaptiſts are chargeable with perverting this noble, and catholic inſtitution, the badge of our common chriſtianity, by which the name of Chriſt is named upon us: when they make it the Shibboleth of a party; and admit members by this ſacred rite into a ſingle ſociety, and under the miniſtry of ſome one man. Is Chriſt divided? Do they not ſeem as if they were baptized into Paul, rather than into Chriſt? And then with an equal narrowneſs of ſpirit inſinuate, they are the men, and wiſdom is found with them; "We are not aſhamed of Chriſt: we make our "public profeſſion in the ordinance of baptiſm, "and that adminiſtered in the moſt ſelf denying "mode."

Now after all this mighty boaſt, baptiſm is not a public profeſſion; but (by the general conſent of all parties) only an entrance into it; for which reaſon it is to be performed but once: whereas by the repetition of every other ordinance we make our public profeſſion: and in that peculiar inſtitution, wherein we ſhew forth the Lord's death, we repeatedly declare, we are not aſhamed of Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, but glory in his croſs. A public profeſſion is not the work of an hour, but the buſineſs of life.

Yet again we hear of a ſuperior pleaſure, ſatisfaction, divine preſence, &c. in the adminiſtration of the ordinance among them.

And is there no beauty, no pleaſure, no divine energy accompanying, when a man on every addition to his family, afreſh dedicates his houſe, afreſh engages himſelf to walk before his houſe in a perfect way; and in particular, devoting this little

one

one to the Lord, obligeth himſelf to bring it up for God; to nurture it in all the principles, and duties of chriſtianity?

The Antipœdobaptiſts ſeem convinced of the propriety of all this: elſe why have they inſtituted a new ordinance among themſelves to anſwer ſuch purpoſes? What I refer to, is Naming children. For although the later Jews, at circumciſion, and Chriſtians after them, at baptiſm, give the name; yet there appears no reaſon for ſuch a practice, as it blends a civil right with a ſacred inſtitution. But ſure it is more abſurd to form ſo ſimple a civil rite into a ſacred inſtitution: to make a ſolemn buſineſs of calling a child, William, or Thomas. I believe for this practice there is no New Teſtament command: therefore this or their adult baptiſm is a work of ſupererogation.

Yet another abſurdity. An Antipœdobaptiſt exclaims againſt mentioning an Old Teſtament ordinance, becauſe he muſt have all goſpel; and yet fixes his chief ſtreſs on the miniſtry of John the Baptiſt; which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, was neither law nor goſpel. John was not a goſpel miniſter, but the voice, or herald, ſent before Chriſt to prepare his way. This was the door, by which the good ſhepherd entered: a temporary diſpenſation, which having anſwered this purpoſe, vaniſhed of itſelf.

Nor was John's baptiſm a goſpel inſtitution: it was the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins; whereas the Chriſtian inſtitution is the baptiſm of faith.

Yet there is ſome analogy; I draw it thus; Baptiſm in the church is juſt what John was in his day, the entrance, or door into chriſtianity: and as

John was in himſelf conſidered very great; and yet in compariſon with the ſuperior light of Chriſtians, much leſs than they; ſo baptiſm, in itſelf conſidered is important; yet in compariſon with the other ordinances of religion, which are all calculated for inſtruction, growth and eſtabliſhment, appears the leaſt; as well running the race is more honourable than juſt entering the courſe. Thus John ſtands as a figure of the ordinance itſelf, not the model of its performance.

CONCLUSION.

UPON the whole, infant baptiſm appears a reaſonable ſervice; and being founded on the true meaning, and ſpirit of both the Old and New Teſtament, is a ſcripture doctrine. While adult baptiſm, with all its parade, ſo evidently calculated to attract the ſenſes, as it is obliged to ſeparate the two Teſtaments in order to ſupport itſelf; and dwells chiefly on the letter of the New Teſtament; appears like a ſuperſtition.

To the law, and to the teſtimony: if they ſpeak not acording to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them. The Old Teſtament teſtified of Chriſt; and he came not to deſtroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil; the types by their accompliſhment, the doctrines, precepts, and immunities, by fixing them on a broader and more permanent baſis.

I had

I had concluded, but for juſt mentioning a very glaring impropriety; that of parents bringing their children to baptiſm, while they neglect to ratify their own baptiſmal covenant at the Lord's table. Surely this ought to be done, and not the other left undone: as he who commanded to baptize, alſo commanded, Do this in remembrance of me. And bleſſed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Amen.

A

FEW REFLECTIONS

ON THE

SABBATH DAY.

THE practice of the early Chriſtians has long been laid aſide in ſome particulars; ſuch as miniſters preaching without maintenance, and the rich ſelling their property to divide among the poor. Nor is the example of the church in its infant ſtate ſo abſolutely binding as ſome conceive: for if we follow the apoſtles minutely in every thing, we muſt circumciſe after baptiſm, as in the inſtance of Timothy; and ſolemnize two ſabbaths every week; which is contrary to the expreſs command of God, which enjoins ſix days labour, as well as one day's reſt. But theſe two ſtanding in the ſame predicament, are moſtly diſputed by the ſame perſons. There is no verbal command in the New Teſtament, either to keep a ſabbath day, or to initiate infants into the viſible church: and ſurely nothing could be more needleſs than ſuch a command; while the will of God concerning both is ſo fully revealed, ſo clearly ſtated, ſo often repeated and inforced in the Old Teſtament. And I think thoſe who want greater light in thoſe things, look much like the Jews in our Saviour's time; who, with the prophecies in their hand, and

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the daily fulfilment of them before their eyes, were continually aſking for a ſign from heaven.

Having before ſpoke to the right of infants initiation, I will now ſay a little for the celebration of the Sabbath; and wiſh thoſe who confine themſelves to the term, Lord's Day, or thoſe who give it no better epithet than Sunday, would conſider whether they mean, the keeping of a ſabbath. For if they only meet on that particular day for worſhip, becauſe it is the cuſtom of Chriſtians, or only to commemorate the day in honour of our Lord's reſurrection: in that caſe the day loſes all the force of a Sabbath.

That the ſeventh day Sabbath was a poſitive inſtitution to the Jews is certain; and it is as certain the keeping holy a ſeventh part of the time is of moral and perpetual obligation, by its being inſerted in the decalogue, with the reaſons there annexed: for thoſe reaſons muſt laſt for ever. As long as there are intelligent creatures they are obliged to celebrate the works of the Creator. Therefore the prophet ſays, God had ſet his Sabbaths as a witneſs betwixt God and man: the Sabbath was made for man, not for the Jew only. And our Lord, while he was moſt ſevere, and indefatigable in rebuking the ſuperſtitious obſervance of the Sabbath, was nevertheleſs ſufficiently ſtrict in its moral and religious obſervance. We find him in the temple, or in the ſynagogue on Sabbath days: and when he declares himſelf Lord of the Sabbath day, it ſurely confirms the ſacredneſs of a Sabbath, to all thoſe who acknowledge him Lord, and King in his church.

Whether the ſeventh or the firſt day of the week was the original Sabbath, the learned variouſly con-

conjecture. However, there is much plauſibility on the ſide of the firſt day: in particular, the manner in which Moſes relates the ſeventh day to be the Sabbath, ſuppoſeth them to be ignorant of it before. And there is no more reaſon againſt the Sabbath being altered to them, than the beginning of the year, or names of the months: many particulars in their ſyſtem being appointed to make them different from other nations.

Beſide, there is a poſitive reaſon why the ſeventh day was proper for the Jewiſh Sabbath, which bears no reference to any other religion under heaven. Their theology being typical, and moſt of their inſtitutions looking to Jeſus in his ſtate of humilation; was not that the propereſt day for their church to reſt, in which the Redeemer literally reſted from all his labours? Was it not a ſuitable day to make a pauſe in life, when both nature and religion made, as it were, a moſt ſolemn pauſe? It was a dark day indeed, ſuited to that dark diſpenſation, which conſtantly pointed at the ſufferings of the Redeemer. Therefore the very reaſons which make the ſeventh day proper to the Jews, render it the moſt improper to the Chriſtians: for ſhall we celebrate our Lord's ſtate of inaction, when he was, as it were, doing nothing? Shall we celebrate the day of our Lord's loweſt indignity; when he lay a ſubject to the king of terrors, bound in the priſon of a tomb?

On what day ſhall the church keep a perpetual Jubilee? on the darkeſt day in the annals of time, the only whole day her Lord lay in the ſepulchre, when religion was indeed a chaos, nothing but darkneſs and confuſion, without one ray of light, or dawn of hope?

Let

Let thoſe who contend for the ſeventh day Sabbath, keep it as it ought to be kept, in mourning, and faſting, and ſackcloth. But let us keep our Jubilee, on the day when Chriſt reſted from his work, as God alſo did from his; that is, to pronounce it good, to rejoice in it as beneficent, to live to govern and ſupport it. This is the day which the Lord hath made (as David prophetically declares) we will be glad and rejoice in it. That day when Chriſt burſt the bands of death, proclaiming liberty to its captives; when he led captivity captive, and was declared the Son of God with power, is ſurely a day always to be remembered.

The apoſtles, and primitive diſciples, although as Jews they kept the ſeventh day Sabbath, according to the Moſaic ritual, yet kept conſtantly the firſt day as a Chriſtian Sabbath, reſting from labour, and meeting together to celebrate chriſtian inſtitutions. On this day our Lord, more than once, appeared perſonally among them, and bleſſed them. And notwithſtanding it was for diſtinction called the Lord's day, it was religiouſly and conſcientiouſly obſerved as a Sabbath. And our Lord joining their ſociety as they were a church met for public worſhip, and pronouncing his benediction on them, ſhould ſeem to ſanctify the practice, and conſecrate the day.

And as but one day in ſeven is to be obſerved; the fourth commandment ſtands in full force, and is our authority to remember (as a moral precept) this ſabbath day to keep it holy; and to hold this ſeventh part of time ſacred, while we employ the other ſix in our worldly buſineſs.

Whether

Whether this be the original Sabbath day, or not, while we connect Creation with Redemption; worſhipping the Almighty Creator in the way himſelf has appointed, thus performing the original intention of the Sabbath; it is a Sabbath to us, in the ſame ſenſe in which every holy convocation is ſaid to be a Sabbath to the Lord our God: and every day which proclaims reſt for man and beaſt is literally a ſabbath. But if any contend ſcrupulouſly from the ſabbatical years, that a ſabbath muſt ever be the *ſeventh*; in this reſpect alſo it is true: we number to us ſix days, and the *ſeventh* is the Sabbath.

While the ſeventh day of the week looks to a Chriſt intombed, the firſt day looks to a Saviour riſen, and enthroned; and in that reſpect the reſt of the ſoul: it is therefore ſpiritually and religouſly a Sabbath. And as it looks to, and is typical of that reſt which remains for the people of God, it is truly and ſublimely a Sabbath.

Therefore while we innocently, and laudably uſe the term, Lord's Day; it ſhould ever be remembred, it has all the ſanction of the Sabbath; and we have an undoubted right to expect the bleſſing God at firſt pronounced on that day; not as tranſferred from the ſeventh to the firſt; but as included in the benediction; in the ſame manner as the gentile church was included in the promiſe made to the ſeed of Abraham; by virtue of which the bleſſings of Abraham are come on the gentiles: ſo the bleſſings of the Sabbath are come on the firſt day of the week.

That this is true in fact, the teſtimonies of thoſe who religiouſly obſerve, and of thoſe who profane it, are a united evidence. And many ſerious

Chriſtians